

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency Programs

DART Cherry Medical Services

The following outlined protocols are presented as a general medical guideline for participation and admission to the program, but should not be considered as all-inclusive. Where there is doubt concerning an offender's appropriateness for the DART Cherry program, we encourage you to call and consult with the DART Cherry facility about the individual circumstances surrounding a referral. One phone call could prevent the need for a trip to the facility to pick up a discharged offender.

MEDICAL STAFF

DART Cherry contracts for on-site medical services with a Psychiatrist, Physician, Physician Extender, Registered Nurse and two Licensed Practical Nurses. Primary medical services are minimally at a minimum of 8 hours a day five days a week. Medical staff remains on call 24/7 for medical emergencies.

MEDICAL LIMITATIONS

DART Cherry is equipped to treat offenders with minor medical problems such as colds, skin rashes, fungal infections etc, and to provide medical services for minor injuries and illnesses which may occur during their stay here. DART Cherry is further equipped to medically manage more serious conditions as long as the offender is on a stabilizing medical regimen upon arrival at the DART Cherry facility. **All such referrals should bring a full supply of medications with them, up to the 90 Days of expected treatment participation.**

Three primary areas of concern are taken into consideration in assignment to the facility, and are discussed as follows:

I. Debilitating Factors: the offender has a pre-existing condition that severely limits minimal participation in program activities or requires intense, personal, "around the clock" care or assistance (i.e. hospital care and/or outpatient treatment with follow up.)

a) Offender requires **intensive detoxification**. DART Cherry does not have a dedicated detoxification unit. Gradual detoxification from alcohol and addictive drugs can be accomplished under medical supervision whenever a clinical decision is made that an offender is manifesting withdrawal symptoms (i.e. offender is an intermittent heavy user and/or has been drug and alcohol free for at least two weeks prior to admission with no significant physical symptoms). Offenders requiring **intensive detoxification** (i.e. offender has been a heavy user for an elongated period with no significant break in usage up to time of admission), requiring hospital accommodations/monitoring, are not appropriate for assignment to the center.

b) DART Cherry is an 'abstinence-based' substance abuse treatment program. If an offender requires a **narcotic** regimen to control chronic pain, a substitute of a non-narcotic pain reliever may be provided.

c) Offender has any condition requiring hospital care or immediate medical care outside the **scope of services** provided by DART Cherry (i.e., injuries requiring immediate x-ray, **unstable** critically high blood pressure, critical heart conditions, etc.) It should be noted that such critical

conditions, will more often than not be exacerbated by the high stress levels created when one is placed in an intense, highly structured treatment environment.

d) Offenders with ***pre-existing appointments*** with their primary physician or other health care providers should satisfy, postpone or cancel, where possible, all such appointments before coming to DART Cherry. This is an issue of "managed care" that should be met before or after treatment services have been provided.

II. Stabilization: Offenders arriving at the DART Cherry facility with diagnosed pre-existing medical/mental health pathology who are in stable condition with prescribed medicines on their person are, with few exceptions, appropriate for the DART Cherry program. Primary consideration is given to mobility, cognition, coherency and comprehension when assessment of mental status is made.

a) Medical staff will continue ***medical regimens*** to maintain medical/mental health stability as prescribed by the offender's primary physician after a full assessment has been conducted by a DART Cherry physician.

***** Offender should bring a 90 day supply of prescription medicines with them*****

b) ***Special accommodations*** are made for offenders whose medical condition requires a regimen of light duty activities (i.e., offender with history of heart problems and is on glycerin regimen will be given an elevator pass, light cleaning duties, and exempted from strenuous physical activities.)

c) DART Cherry is a ***handicapped accessible*** facility. Offenders in wheelchairs who are otherwise able to participate in treatment activities are appropriate for DART Cherry.

d) **All offenders are treated with universal precautions.** Offenders with known ***HIV/AIDS*** are appropriate for DART Cherry when in a stabilized condition. Where medical costs (medicines) are high, every attempt will be made to assist these offenders with community resources.

e) DART Cherry **does not have a methadone maintenance program or a suboxone program.** Offenders on ***methadone maintenance or suboxone*** will be medically managed with alternative medicines.

III. Cost: DART Cherry is a residential community-based substance abuse treatment facility within the Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency Programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety. DART Cherry **is not under the jurisdiction of the Division of Prisons.** **As such, medical costs are not assumed by the state for major medical/mental health care.** DART Cherry is **not** required to provide, at cost to the state, extensive, major medical care. All offenders should be aware that vision, dental and major health care problems will **not** be addressed at the expense of DART Cherry or the State of North Carolina. Offenders assessed with such conditions will be discharged and referred for hospital care or back to their primary physician. DART Cherry health care protocol/policy is as stated above and further includes or exempts the following:

a) **Physical exams**, to include blood work and urinalyses are standard protocol for all offenders assigned to DART Cherry and therefore these costs are assumed by the State. Physician ordered C-scan, MRI, medical x-ray, etc are not assumed by the State.

b) **Emergency services** as needed are assumed by the State. In-hospital stays are not. When an offender is admitted to the hospital, he is discharged from the DART Cherry program and hospital costs are assumed by the offender either through personal or family resources. Offenders at high risk

for major medical crisis when placed in a new and stressful environment should be carefully considered for other alternatives to the DART Cherry program.

c) Prescription medication costs **may** be assumed by DART Cherry within limits and in certain urgent situations. Offenders on large amounts of medicine or medicines with high costs must ensure that they bring their supply with them or have the means to pay for refills themselves (i.e. private insurance, cash, etc.)

d) All offenders with **vision and dental care** needs will be referred to local community resources at the offender's expense.

e) Over-the-counter medicines such as non-aspirin pain relievers, non-alcoholic cough syrup (Robitussin), antacids etc. are provided by the facility.